

# SCGOVNEWS

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NEWSROOM

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

E-NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

Sept. 30, 2013

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*MEDIA NOTE: Due to HIPAA Privacy Regulations, media may be present during the group education sessions only. A bilingual calendar of events will be available at [www.SarasotaHealthInsuranceMarketplace.com/](http://www.SarasotaHealthInsuranceMarketplace.com/).*

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## No-cost assistance for those seeking health insurance begins Tuesday

SARASOTA COUNTY — Starting Tuesday, Oct. 1, local residents will be able to get live in-person help as they go through the process of applying for and choosing new coverage options in the federal Health Insurance Marketplace. Three case managers, who are Certified Application Counselors, will visit locations across the county to assist individuals in understanding health coverage options and guiding them through the enrollment process. They will also conduct group education sessions in the community. There is no cost for these services.

Because so much of the process is Internet-driven, the counselors will help anyone who requests assistance, including those who do not have access to a computer. One of the key venues is local libraries, which have offered support with their computers. The counselors will also have a presence at the Glasser/Schoenbaum Human Services Center, Goodwill Manasota locations, and the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex. A partnership also exists with Sarasota Memorial Hospital.

The open-enrollment period is from Oct. 1 to March 31, 2014. The counselors are not affiliated with any insurance companies. Their role is to guide and provide unbiased information to help individuals make informed choices about coverage options based on their health care needs.

This effort is the result of additional funding that Sarasota County's Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), which is a private-public partnership between the Community Health Center of North Port Inc. and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County, received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resource Services Administration (HRSA).

"We were already receiving funding through HRSA and responded to the funding opportunity to provide outreach and enrollment assistance," said Community Health Center of North Port Inc. CEO Linda Stone, Ph.D.

Helping people access affordable health insurance is part of a larger local collaborative partnership to help preserve, strengthen and even improve the local health care system, said Stone.

Chronic health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure as well as anxiety and depression can be effectively managed when individuals have access to affordable primary health care, health promotion and prevention services, case

management and other behavioral health services. This ultimately improves health outcomes among those living with complex health concerns while helping to lower health care costs, according to health officials.

“With the help of community partners, we hope to educate an estimated 5,000 individuals about affordable coverage options and enroll an estimated 2,500 uninsured individuals into an affordable insurance plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (Healthy Kids, Florida KidCare, and the Children’s Medical Services Network in Florida) as well as other insurance plans on the marketplace,” said Stone.

For more information, visit [www.SarasotaHealthInsuranceMarketplace.com](http://www.SarasotaHealthInsuranceMarketplace.com) or call 866-547-2793.

This information is also available for those who do not have access to a computer at touch-screen health kiosks at the William L. Little Health & Human Services Center in Sarasota, Senior Friendship Centers and all local libraries.

Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, religion, or genetic information. Persons with disabilities who require assistance or alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.), or who wish to file a complaint, should contact Sarasota County ADA/ Civil Rights Coordinator, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236. Phone: 941-861-5000, TTY 7-1-1 or 1-800-955-8771; email: [adacoordinator@scgov.net](mailto:adacoordinator@scgov.net).

